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ROBERT S. PEABODY FOUNDATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGY

ANNUAL REPORT
1946

PHILLIPS ACADEMY
Andover, Massachusetts

January 2, 1947

Dr. Claude M. Fuess
Clerk of the Board of Trustees
Phillips Academy
Andover, Massachusetts

Dear Dr. Fuess:

The year 1946 found the Robert S. Peabody Foundation in the difficulties of reconversion, although these were somewhat different from those which have gripped the country.

Plans to acquire a second beachwagon or light truck to permit the Foundation to put two parties into the field have not been realized, due to the shortage of vehicles and the poor quality of military vehicles available through the War Assets Administration. It is hoped that these plans will be realized during the coming year, which promises to be a more active one as far as field work is concerned.

Mr. Johnson has continued with investigations which involve the study of sites which are now located below sea level and which can only be pursued by reason of the collaboration of specialists in other fields, such as botany, geology, and related sciences. In April, work began on excavations for the foundation of the new building of the John Hancock Life Insurance Company. Since this is scarcely more than a block distant from the building of the New England Mutual Life Insurance Company, beneath which remains of the Boylston Street Fishweir were found, and since the foundations were to be laid deep in the soil it was apparent that sediments similar to those surrounding the Fishweir would be uncovered. There was a chance that portions of the weir might also be uncovered. It will be recalled that the report on this weir was published by the Foundation in 1942. Mr. Johnson reorganized and added to the group which made the

study of material secured at the Boylston Street weir for the purpose of continuing investigations. It was recognized in 1942 that many aspects of the problem of the Boylston Street weir remain unknown; the present project will increase our knowledge of these aspects. To date a number of things have been accomplished: Most important is the removal of a core comprising sediments extending from the bottom of the building excavation to bed rock, 109 feet below. The sediments thus removed are being examined for their pollen content, as well as the diatoms, foraminifera, and other organisms which they contain. The study of this core is unique for the Boston region, since this is the first time that such an analysis has been accomplished. It is expected that much will be learned concerning the history of the Boston Basin, as a result of which it should be possible to assign a place in this history to the Boylston Street Fishweir more satisfactorily than has heretofor been possible.

Various other analyses are planned. The necessary materials will be collected as the excavation procedes. Mr. Sheldon Judson, working under the direction of Dr. Kirk Bryan, will make a detailed geological study of the Boston Basin. During the summer and fall he made studies in the field in connection with this work. Dr. Elso Barghorn, of Harvard University, is prepared to study wood samples and to make microbiological studies of organisms in the sediments. Dr. L. R. Wilson, of Massachusetts State College, a well-known authority on pollen, will conduct the analysis of the pollen. Dr. Fred Phleger, of Amherst College, will study the foraminifera from samples which are removed. Until his recent lamented death, Dr. David Linder was to have identified the diatoms; a satisfactory substitute for him will have to be secured. Mr. Frederick Johnson, of the R. S. Peabody Foundation, will carry on archaeological investigations, and

will act in a general supervisory capacity.

The final report on these investigations is scheduled for publication by the Foundation. It is probable that the work, which is meticulous and time-consuming, will not be completed for about two years. The Foundation is happy to announce that the Viking Fund, of New York City, has granted Mr. Johnson the sum of $1000 to aid in laboratory work and in the publication of the results of the study.

No further work was done in Maine during the past summer. Mr. Byers made a few tests at sites which were thought to be worth investigation, but it was not until November that he found a clue which may be promising. If arrangements can be made, it is hoped to undertake excavations at this site during the coming summer.

Local archaeological work was carried on during 1946 by Mr. Ripley P. Bullen, who made a survey of archaeological sites along the shore near Ipswich, and then proceeded to excavate a shell heap on Great Neck. The material secured during this work is now in the Museum undergoing cataloguing, cleaning, and study. In the work, Mr. Bullen was aided by several students whom he paid for their time. The work was only possible by reason of the fact that Mr. Bullen secured a second-hand car which he sold at the end of the summer, the Foundation meeting the difference between the purchase price and the sale price.

Plans call for a continuation of the work on local sites which has occupied Mr. Bullen's time for the past few years.

In May, Mr. Byers' term as Editor of American Antiquity expired. However, because of the absence of the new editor from the country, he continued with editorial duties until late September. A very important monograph which is to be published by the Society for American Archaeology as

a Memoir and issued with the January, 1947, number of American Antiquity, remains in his hands as editor. This is now in final page proof, awaiting only completion of the index.

In spite of Mr. Byers' protests that he would have these continuing editorial duties, he was elected President of the Society for American Archaeology, to hold office until May, 1947.

As time has permitted, preliminary work leading to the study of the collection from the Nevin Shell Heap, made in 1936 and 1937 have been under way. With money very generously donated some years ago by Mr. Eli Lilly, a competent artist has been retained to make drawings of grave plans and of certain decorated bone tools in anticipation of publication. More intensive work will get under way in January.

Mr. Johnson, in collaboration with Dr. Hugh M. Raup, of Harvard, has completed the study of Grassy Island, and the manuscript is now in press. The study is a peculiarly interesting one for it deals with the site in an Indian village which now lies below sea level. Study of the artifacts shows that the people who formerly lived on Grassy Island were members of a much larger group who were spread over New York State, New Jersey, and southern New England. Through a study of the deposits, mainly peat, which overlie the artifacts, it has been possible to estimate that the site was occupied at about A.D. 1200. The study of the peat on Grassy Island has been correlated with similar studies made in the lower valley of the Taunton River; the result has been an elucidation of many botanical and geological problems. These, in turn are important because of their relation to the recent rise in sea level.

Publication of the symposium volume entitled Man in Northeastern North America has been held up because of the war. Early in the year,

manuscript of this volume, which is edited by Mr. Johnson, was sent to the printer. In late summer, work was started by the press, and it is now hoped that the volume will be ready for distribution in early spring. This will be a significant contribution from your foundation. An advance order of 100 copies has already been received from the University of Chicago.

Mr. Johnson's work on various anthropological committees continues unabated. The Committee for the Recovery of Archaeological Remains, of which Mr. Johnson is Secretary, is concerned with the salvaging of archaeological data which will be destroyed by the construction of Federal multi-purpose dams. The Committee, chiefly through the tireless work of Mr. Johnson, has been successful in inaugurating a huge program which will be handled largely through the cooperation of a number of government agencies and local organizations. As a result of this activity, a number of significant investigations have been made in the Missouri Valley, and projects in other river valleys in the country are about to be started. It is estimated that the program will occupy the major attention of the field of American Archaeology for the next twenty-five years.

In January, 1946, Mr. Johnson was appointed to a committee charged with the responsibility of reorganizing the American Anthropological Association. As a result of the meetings of this committee it is expected that the structure of the Association and of the whole field of Anthropology will be modified.

At the request of the American Council of Learned Societies, Mr. Johnson prepared a history of archaeology from 1939 to 1945. The manuscript was accepted by the Council in September. It will be printed in a large volume tentatively entitled Progress in the Humanities, which

will be published by the Council, largely for foreign distribution.

Mr. Johnson presented a paper on American Archaeology in a symposium on "Present Status and Future Trends of Anthropology", held at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, December 27, 1946.

It is gratifying to announce that the Viking Fund has awarded Mr. Johnson a grant of $10,000 which is to be used to continue the archaeological, botanical, and geological work in the southwestern Yukon. This is, in a sense, recognition of the importance of the work done in that area in 1944 by Mr. Johnson and his associates. The expedition to the Yukon will be composed of Mr. Johnson and Dr. Hugh M. Raup, of Harvard University, and will thus become a joint project of the two institutions. The expedition, which has been the subject of a separate memorandum to the Trustees, will leave Boston in the late spring of 1948, and will return in October.

In December, Mr. Byers delivered an illustrated talk to the Boston Archaeological Club at the request of the Archaeological Institute of America.

Relations with the Massachusetts Archaeological Society continue on a friendly basis. The Foundation has been made the official Repository of the Society, and now cares for the collections which are the Society's property. Mr. Bullen is custodian of these collections. The Executive Committee of the Society has met here, and it is planned to hold the semi-annual meeting of the Society here in April, 1947.

This Fall the Warren K. Moorehead Chapter of the Society invited the Foundation to take over excavation of a site in Bridgewater which is probably the historic village of Titicut visited by Edward Winslow and

Stephen Hopkins on June 21, 1621. If this should prove to be the case, and it seems quite likely that it is, this excavation may well be the most important one ever undertaken by the Foundation in New England since it can be expected to tie the archaeological material to a definite time horizon in New England, a tie hitherto lacking.

Mr. Byers continues as Editor of the Society, and Mr. Johnson, as Trustee. Mr. Johnson also continues as Editor of the Eastern States Archaeological Federation.

During the year the Museum has been kept open on Saturday afternoons and Sunday afternoons by aid grant boys. While the number of visitors is never large, there continue to be visitors nearly every Saturday and Sunday and it therefore seems advisable to continue this practice.

No accessions have been made to the Museum collections.

The library has been increased by the addition of 10 titles over and above the 58 exchanges which are received each year.

It is with regret that the resignation of Mrs. Clifford A. Drew, Secretary and Librarian, as of March 1, 1946, is reported. Her place is now occupied by Miss Grace V. Morin, of Andover.

The financial condition of the Foundation continues good. During the year ended June 30, 1946, a surplus of $2,753.40 was built up, and this has been transferred to the Reserve for Expansion of Future Activities. If conditions permit the undertaking of the ambitious program of research which is planned, such a state is not likely to exist much longer. It is quite probable that the reserve may be called on to permit adequate implementation of the work.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas S. Byers

Director